

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF H. B. No. 5368 (RAISED) AN ACT
CONCERNING NO WORKER LEFT BEHIND.**

My name is John Meyers. I am a consultant working primarily in the area of international education, development, and global readiness. As part of my consulting portfolio, I serve as the Project Director – Educational Programs for the World Affairs Council of Connecticut.

I have twice been named to the United States delegation to Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Human Resource Development Working Group – an international grouping involving 21 economies in the Asia-Pacific region.

Additionally, I have contributed to various task forces at the Eastern CT Workforce Investment Board and was elected in 2009 to the Regional School District 19 Board of Education. Most recently I served on the House/Senate Majority Leaders Jobs Growth Roundtable.

Through this service I have come to understand the dynamics that affect a region's, state's, or country's capacity to develop a competitive workforce – central to economic development and growth.

Before commenting on the merits of the proposed No Worker Left Behind bill, I share with you that last year the United States hosted the APEC Human Resource Development Meeting. Representatives from some 20 countries convened in Chicago for four days to consider workforce development needs in their own economies as well as those that would facilitate increase trade and economic cooperation across the Pacific Rim.

As host, the United States had a lead role in helping set the agenda and identifying speakers. To showcase an innovative

programs, the United States invited Jim Jacobs, President, Macomb Community College...from the State of Michigan. Dr. Jacobs spoke about the role of Community Colleges in workforce development and provided this international gathering with insight into Michigan's response to rebuilding one of the most challenged economy's in the United States.

The underpinnings for economic growth and development are rooted in the educational attainment and advanced skill levels. The more intellectual capital, knowledge, and skill among people, the greater the opportunity for innovation, job creation, and job growth. It is a central reason why companies and organizations spend billions of dollars annually for education and professional development programs.

The No Worker Left Behind bill is one that is welcome:

- It reflects a significant and important investment in Connecticut's greatest resource – its people.
- It connects directly to the Office for Workforce Competitiveness's Talent-Based Strategy to keep Connecticut competitive in the 21st century.
- And, locally, for me, in Eastern Connecticut, it reflects the priorities identified by the Eastern Workforce Investment Board: Increase investments in education and training programs that promote core STEM [Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math] competencies for high wage, high growth industries.

Again, I recall my four days in Chicago last summer with representatives from Education and Labor Ministries of 20 countries considering the same workforce and economic challenges. Many did not have the advantage of a

community/technical college system to quickly develop and provide skills upgrade for its workforce.

And I connect my experience with our Workforce Board, serving with representatives from labor, business, and area community colleges. How fortunate that we can readily convene all these stakeholders to consider our challenges.

Connecticut has a potential advantage with its well developed community college system – H.B. 5368 would provide the resources to allow more people to benefit from the State's longterm investment in post-secondary education. People will return to the workforce new skills sets, ready for new jobs, and contributing onbce again to our state and local economy.

The result will be a smarter Connecticut, a more innovative Connecticut, and a working Connecticut.

